

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993

The *National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)* of 1993, requires that individuals be given the opportunity to register to vote or to change their voter registration data when applying for or receiving services or assistance at any office designated as a voter registration agency. All Recruiting Offices of the Armed Forces have been designated as voter registration agencies.

Purpose of this Instructional Guide

The *Voter Registration Application Instructional Guide for Military Recruiters* outlines the procedures for personnel in Recruiting Offices of the Armed Forces to follow in order to comply with the NVRA when persons enter for any service or assistance. The *Guide* also gives step-by-step procedures to follow for each state.

This *Guide* is intended for all DoD Components, the U.S. Coast Guard, and all Reserve components involved in management, oversight, operation or support of Recruiting Offices of the Armed Forces.

This *Guide* is updated and available on the Federal Voting Assistance Program's website, www.fvap.ncr.gov.

Recruiting Commands

Each Recruiting Command should designate, in writing, a responsible officer who will oversee and coordinate the functions, responsibilities, and form distribution for its Recruiting Offices in each state. Each Command should provide the names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of these officers to the Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program.

Each level of command should designate, in writing, a responsible officer to oversee and coordinate the functions and responsibilities of this voter assistance program.

Senior Person at Recruiting Offices

The senior person at each Recruiting Office of the Armed Forces shall ensure the following services are available to all eligible citizens who enter the Recruiting Office.

- Distribution of Voter Registration Application form (DD 2644) and the Voter Registration Information form (DD 2645).
- Assistance to prospective enlistees and citizens in completing the voter registration application form, unless the citizen refuses such assistance.
- Acceptance of completed voter registration application forms for transmittal to the appropriate **state election official. Forms are not to be sent to the Federal Voting Assistance Program.**

The senior person at each Recruiting Office shall also ensure:

- All registration applications are transmitted by the deadline specified and to the addressee specified for the state in which the individual has applied for voter registration. Addresses are listed in each state section of Chapter 2 and registration deadlines for each state are listed in Appendix E. **Forms are not to be sent to the Federal Voting Assistance Program.**
- A compilation of statistical information be maintained concerning voter registration assistance provided. A recommended format for the compilation of this statistical information is specified in Appendix D. The names of persons applying or declining to register to vote may be used only for voter registration purposes and may not be released for any other purpose.

All personnel assigned to duty at Recruiting Offices for the Armed Forces shall be trained and capable of providing the services or assistance required in the above paragraphs when individuals enter the Recruiting Office.

Recruiter

Each recruiter in a Recruiting Office of the Armed Forces during the course of interviewing or providing assistance or any service to a prospective enlistee shall:

- Provide to each prospective enlistee the Voter Registration Information form (DD 2645) and Voter Registration Application form (DD 2644).
- Distribute to each eligible citizen the Voter Registration Application form, DD 2644 and provide assistance in completing the form unless the applicant refuses such assistance.
- Transmit all completed registration applications in a timely manner to the appropriate state official.
Forms are not to be sent to the Federal Voting Assistance Program.
- Provide to each eligible citizen or prospective enlistee, who does not decline to register to vote, the same degree of assistance for the completion of the registration application form as is provided by the office for the completion of its own forms; i.e., application for enlistment, unless the person refuses such assistance.
- Maintain statistical information on voter registration assistance in the recommended format prescribed in Appendix D.
- Maintain records pertaining to voter registration assistance or activities for a minimum of two years, specifically retention of the Voter Registration Information form, DD 2645.

Legal Restrictions

An active duty or reserve member of the Armed Forces or employee of a DoD Component who provides service or assistance as described above shall not:

- Seek to influence an applicant's political preference or party registration.
- Display any such political preference or party allegiance.
- Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to discourage the applicant from registering to vote.
- Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to lead the applicant to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits. No information relating to a

declination to register to vote in connection with an application made at a Recruiting Office of the Armed Forces may be used for any purpose other than voter registration.

A person, including an election official, who in any election for Federal office:

Knowingly and willfully intimidates, threatens, or coerces, or attempts to intimidate, threaten, or coerce, any person for:

- Registering to vote, or voting, or attempting to register or vote.
- Urging or aiding any person to register to vote, to vote, or to attempt to register or vote or exercising any right under the NVRA.

Knowingly and willfully deprives, defrauds, or attempts to deprive or defraud the resident of a state of a fair and impartially conducted election process, by:

- The procurement or submission of voter registration applications that are known by the person to be materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent under the laws of the state in which the election is held.
- The procurement, casting, or tabulation of ballots that are known by the person to be materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent under the laws of the state in which the election is held,

shall be fined in accordance with title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned not more than five years or both.

Questions and Assistance

The senior person at each Recruiting Office of the Armed Forces should contact the responsible person at the next higher command for advice and assistance which cannot be resolved locally.

In the event assistance from the next higher command is not immediately available, the Federal Voting Assistance Program offers an Ombudsman Service at 800-438-VOTE or 800 438-8683 and by e-mail at nvra@fvap.ncr.gov.